

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L KIGALI 1278

LIMDIS

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID, RW, US

SUBJECT: PC FISH CULTURE ND BEYOND

REF KIGALI 1277

1. I TELEPHONED SECGEN RENZAHU THIS MORNING TO FOLLOW UP ON PRESIDENT'S "COMPROMISE" OFFER ON FISH CULTURE (REFTEL), REMINDING HIM WE WERE DOWN TO THE WIRE WITH RESPECT TO PC RECRUITMENT SCHEDULE. I SAID IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT WE MEET AT ONCE TO TOUCH UP PROJECT FOR SIGNATURE, REDEFINING ROLES OF "HALF DOZEN" VOLUNTEERS WHO WOULD IMPLEMENT IT.

2. RENZAHU SAID THERE WAS NO WAY WE WOULD BE ABLE TO MEET BEFORE NEXT WEEK, GIVEN PRESSURE OF OTHER WORK, AND HE CORRECTED MY RECOLLECTION OF DCD OF PCV'S APPROVED BY PRESIDENT: "TWO OR THREE" WAS WHAT HE SAID HE HAD WRITTEN DOWN DURING MEETING (HABYARIMANA ACTUALLY SAID "FOUR OR FIVE," BUT I HOPED TO NEGOTIATE THIS NUMBER UPWARD).

3. I TOLD RENZAHU THAT I WAS LEFT IN AN EXTREMELY AWKWARD POSITION, AS WASHINGTON WAS URGENTLY PRESSING PCD FOR CONFIDENTIAL

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DEFINITIVE WORD ON HOW MANY VOLUNTEERS SHOULD BE RECRUITED AND TRAINED. I ADDED THAT, UNTIL YESTERDAY, AT NO POINT IN OUR MANY PREVIOUS DISCUSSIONS OF PROJECT WITH GOR -- INCLUDING WITH HIMSELF -- HAD WE EVER BEEN TOLD THAT TWELVE VOLUNTEERS WERE TOO MANY. WE WOULD LOOK FOOLISH IN WASHINGTON'S EYES, I WARNED, AND GOR COULD NOT ESCAPE APPEARING THE SAME.

4. I CONTINUED: IF GOR REALLY INTENDED TO CUT BACK PCV ROLE TO THIS EXTENT, I SERIOUSLY QUESTIONED WHETHER THERE WAS ANY APPROPRIATE ROLE FOR US AT ALL. AS I SOUGHT TO EXPLAIN TO PRESIDENT HIS PRESENCE, WE VIEW FISH CULTURE AS PEACE CORPS PROJECT MERELY BACKED UP BY SOME MATERIAL SUPPORT FROM USAID -- NOT AS A CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROJECT. WE HAD DISCUSSED IT FOR OVER A YEAR WITH GOR OFFICIALS, INVARIABLY STRESSING THIS ASPECT, AND UNTIL PAST FEW WEEKS HAD NEVER RECEIVED ANY CONTRARY INDICATION FROM GOR. I CONCLUDED BY SAYING I FELT OBLIGED TO REPORT RWANDA'S CHANGE OF TUNE TO WASHINGTON AND AWAIT INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE PRUSUING DISCUSSIONS ANY FURTHER.

5. RENZAHO SAID HE REGRETTED MY POSITION, BUT HE HOPED WASHINGTON WOULD UNDERSTAND PRESIDENT COULD NOT "ACCEPT" ASSIGNMENT OF SO MANY VOLUNTEERS FOR A PROJECT OF ONLY \$150,000. I REJECTED NOTION OF TYING NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS TO AMOUNT OF DOLLAR INVESTMENT, BUT RENZAHO -- SPEAKING "ENTRE NOUS" -- FELT COMPELLED TO REMIND ME THAT GOR HAD MADE CLEAR FROM VERY BEGINNING, IN SIGNING PC AGREEMENT WITH AMB FRITTS, THAT IT WOULD ONLY ACCEPT VOLS TO EXTEND THEY WERE NECESSARY IN CARRYING OUT CAPITAL PROJECTS.

6. COMMENT: IF EVER THERE WAS ANY SUCH UNDERSTANDING RE PEACE CORPS WITH MY PREDECESSOR, I AM UNAWARE OF IT
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AND THE FILES DON'T SHOW IT. MOREOVER, WE NOW HAVE FIVE PCV'S IN-COUNTRY ON PROJECTS TOTALLY UNRELATED TO US BILATERAL AID. I AM AFRAID, RATHER, THAT GOR -- WHICH ADMITTEDLY SIGNED PC AGREEMENT IN 1974 WITH SOME MISGIVINGS -- HAS NOW DECIDED VOLUNTEERS ARE SIMPLY NOT WORTH ITS TROUBLE (A MINPLAN COMMISSION IS CURRENTLY SURVEYING ROLES OF VOLS FROM ALL COUNTRIES WITH CRITICAL EYE, WE'RE TOLD).

7. PAINFUL AS IT IS FOR ME, I RECOMMEND THAT WE GO NO FURTHER WITH PC FISH CULTURE UNLESS GOR AGAIN CHANGES ITS TUNE (WHICH FRANKLY I DON'T EXPECT). IN MANY, MANY CONTACTS STERNIN AND I HAVE HAD WITH GOR SINCE WE ARRIVED HERE, WE HAVE HEARD ONLY ONE RESERVATION SERIOUSLY VOICED ABOUT VOLS UNTIL NOW: THAT GOR FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO PROVIDE HOUSING. WITH AID'S HELP, WE HAVE BENT OVER BACKWARD TO ACCOMMODATE RWANDA ON THIS POINT IN PLANNING PC PROGRAMS. BUT I DO NOT APPROVE OF ACCOMMODATING THEIR NOTION THAT PCV'S SHOULD BE ACCEPTED ONLY ON "SUFFERANCE" IN ORDER TO WIN OUR CAPITAL ASSISTANCE, AND ONLY IN NUMBERS SOMEHOW PROPORTIONATE TO AMOUNT OF CAPITAL INVESTMENT.

8. RECOGNIZE THIS POSES SERIOUS PROBLEMS FOR PC FUTURE
IN RWANDA, A FUTURE WHICH I HAVE ALWAYS CONSIDERED VERY
PROMISING (AND IN PAST, RWAANDANS -- FROM PRESIDENT ON
DOWN -- HAVE ASSURED ME I WAS RIGHT). I AM APPALLED
THAT TOP-LEVEL GOR NOW PROFESSES NOT TO SEE POTENTIAL
BENEFITS FROM PC ACTIVITY IN ITS IMPOVERISHED COUNTRY-
SIDE, IN DOZENS OF ROLES WELL-PROVEN ELSEWHERE; CERTAINLY
GOR TECHNICIANS ARE HUNGRY FOR PC HELP. BUT I SEE
NOTHING TO BE GAINED FROM FURTHER ARM-TWISTING.

9. STERNING AND I AWAIT WASHINGTON'S INSTRUCTIONS.
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